

Rodman serves his time while Bulls await his return

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Rodman's suspension, the Bulls lost to the Houston Rockets on Sunday. The Rockets, who lost 110-86 at the United Center on Jan. 11, were without Charles Barkley.

Chicago, currently 35-5, visits Cleveland and hosts Toronto at the United Center before embarking on a long and chal-

lenging road trip.

The West Coast swing includes games at Vancouver, Sacramento, Golden State, Seattle, Portland and the Los Angeles Lakers.

All without Rodman, who's won five straight league rebounding titles, just recently grabbed his 10,000th career board and is averaging 16.5 this

season. Now young players like Jason Caffey and Dickey Simpkins will get more playing time.

"I think it will be great for the club. Now we have the challenge of going out every night, rebounding and playing an all-around game," said Scottie Pippen.

"Most of us have had enough

experience with this to know how to handle it," said center Luc Longley, who didn't want to talk about the Rodman situation.

During a 10-game stretch Rodman missed because of a calf injury last season, the Bulls went 8-2, despite playing all but two of the games on the road. The losses came at Orlando and

Seattle.

When Rodman was suspended six games last March for head-butting referee Ted Bernhardt, Chicago went 5-1 with four of the victories at home. The Bulls also played two games in that span without Pippen, who had sore knees, and the only loss came at Toronto.

In all, they were 15-3 without

Rodman last season and are 3-0 in his absence this season.

Jordan said if and when suspension is lifted, the Bulls will be ready to welcome Rodman back to work.

"I think it's like a guy getting out of jail. I think he's paid his dues in some respects. If he pays his dues, you take him back," Jordan said.

Packers approach Super Bowl with a businesslike attitude

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Holmgren said.

Free safety Eugene Robinson, one of several veterans who are enjoying their first taste of the Super Bowl, said he's going to take in all the eats that New Orleans has to offer.

"I'm eating everything," Robinson said. "You got any dreams? I'm eating them, too."

"I'm eating everything down

here. I don't eat oysters, but I'm going to eat them just to say I ate oysters. Frog legs, I'm eating them. They got any rattlesnake? I'm eating that, too. I'm not going to worry about my diet. I'll just take some Pepto-Bismol," Robinson said.

Tight end Mark Chmura said he doubted his teammates would hang out into the wee hours on Bourbon Street flirting with mischief.

"I don't think so. I mean, we're going to have fun, just like any other team would, but we know where to draw the line," he said. "We know the reason we're down here is to play a football game, not to treat it like a vacation and turn it into one big party."

That would come only after a victory, split end Antonio Freeman said.

"I think our approach has to

be just as it has been all year: we'll focus at practice, and when practices and meetings are over, then it's time to have fun," Freeman said. "We just can't let them run together, because that's when you run into problems."

Holmgren said middle linebacker Ron Cox, who took over two weeks ago after starter George Koonce's season-ending knee injury, missed a

workout last week because he had the flu. But he said everybody else is fine and his team is as healthy as it's been all year.

Holmgren may want this players to have some fun in the Big Easy, but he's not giving them any days off this week.

That didn't bother All-Pro strong safety LeRoy Butler, who is a fan of Holmgren's no-

pads practices.

"The way we practice every day is like a day off," Butler said. "That didn't bother me as much as we can't play golf. That really bothered me."

Credit Holmgren with drawing the line somewhere. He figured bringing the clubs along might have turned this trip into a little bit more pleasure than he had in mind.

Cubs believe they can win NL Central Division race inexpensively

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They also re-signed three of their own free agents, first baseman Mark Grace, center fielder Brian McRae and second baseman Ryne Sandberg, as their payroll has climbed from last year's \$32.6 million to more than \$40 million.

But compared to the huge signings across town - the White Sox got Albert Belle for \$55 million over five years, ex-

Cub Jaime Navarro for \$20 million over four years and several other players - the Cubs seem relatively frugal.

MacPhail has heard some fans grumble that the Tribune Co., which owns the Cubs, didn't spend enough to add a power hitter, a left fielder and a third baseman.

"How much are fans willing to pay to foot the bill for these players? Fans want \$90 mil-

lion payrolls and \$4 box seats," said MacPhail, who arrived in 1994 after nearly a decade with the small-market Minnesota Twins.

"We have significant resources - just as (Twins owner) Carl Pohlad has great personal wealth. But it's not healthy for the game that players become charitable entities. There are better contribu-

tions.

"I think the players deserve to be paid for all the income they generate. Also, I don't think teams should be giant profit centers and the way the game is now, I don't think we have to worry about that."

"I've always had faith in this organization, in MacPhail, in Lynch and in Rigglesman," Grace said. "Mostly, I have faith in my teammates. If

everybody takes care of business and with Rojas anchoring our bullpen, I really think we can win the division."

McRae also liked the Cubs' offseason moves. But he urged management to deal for powerful Atlanta outfielder David Justice, who is on the trading block.

"I just talked to him yesterday and he said, 'I'd look good in Cubs pinstripes,'" said McRae, who last season criticized management for not improving the team. "When you finish 10 games under .500, you've got to make sure it won't happen again."

But Lynch, who refused to discuss Justice because of tampering rules, said he didn't think the Cubs would add another big salary.

"We set out to do certain things this offseason - add starting pitching, improve the bullpen, help the offense - and I think we did that," Lynch said. "We'd be naive to think that what the White Sox do has no impact on us at all, because we're competing for some of the same fans. But our focus has to be on our division, and I think we'll give it a pretty good run."

Alexander grapples to wrestling top

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wrestling."

Alexander's versatility gives Stefano several options in preparing Myers Park for opponents. Because Alexander can be effective in every weight class between 130-145, the Mustangs have a good chance of winning matches that they otherwise might lose.

"I put him up against a kid we need to beat, and I know he can beat them," Stefano said. "He's strong enough to wrestle in the upper weight class...just to help the team."

Stefano is convinced that wrestling is one of, if not the most demanding of all sports. His description of Alexander's ability provides an in-depth look at what it takes to be suc-

cessful in the sport.

"Kwame is a strategist. There's 30 seconds left in the period and he doesn't let the guy escape, he knows what moves to put on in the match," Stefano said. "Quickness, conditioning, technique, strength, and strategy are the keys to wrestling, and he has all of that."

Although Alexander has

enjoyed a successful high school career, he's been able to keep winning and losing in perspective. The key is to maintain a sense of balance.

"I really don't mind losing, I just try to learn from my mistakes," he said. "I just try to go out and do what I can for the promoting of the sport in the South, and to help my coaches and teammates."

Dynamic duo gets Rams running

By Eric Bozeman
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

In the specialized world of track and field, everything is narrowed down to tenths of a second and mere inches.

The pressure is often more than most athletes can cope with, and the ones that do are rare.

At Harding High, coach Arthur Tucker has a pair of super sophomores who have made the most of an opportunity to shave time off the girls track team.

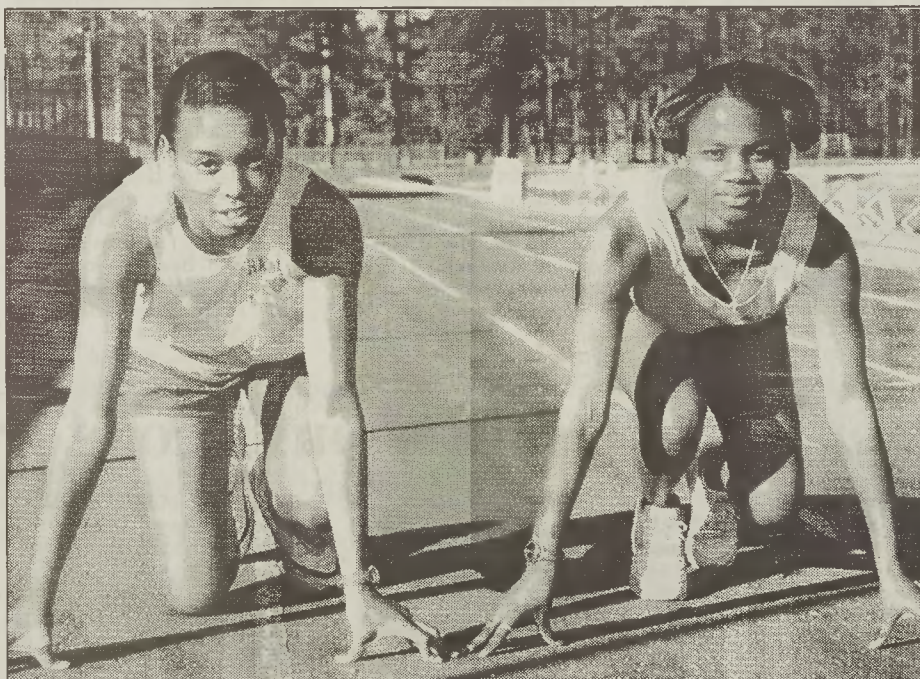
Kamata Potts and Angelic Grier are run key legs on Harding's 400, and 800 meter relay teams. Tucker acknowledges the separate talents of his two young stars, yet both runners are very similar.

"Me and my assistant Barry Cole noticed Kamata when she was in Wilson Middle School," Tucker said. "I personally noticed myself when she won the open 100 and 200 in a middle school track meet. When she came up to high school, she ran with the upperclassmen, and nobody left her, she was always in the pack, and sometimes leading the pack."

Leading the pack became natural for Potts, be it relays or open events, as she displayed last week in a state indoor qualifying meet at Chapel Hill. She won her heat of the 500 meter dash with a time of 1 minute, 32.16 seconds. Although she missed qualifying for the state in the event by a second, Potts built on her reputation from last season as she and Grier were the only freshmen on the 400 and 800 relay state qualifying teams.

Potts is a firm believer in the training that has vaulted her to sudden success in her early high school career. Potts best times are 12.4 in the 100, 25.9 in the 200.

"Indoor is like something that



Kamata Potts and Angelic Grier lead Harding High's relay teams.

PHOTO/SUE ANN JOHNSON

Potts and Grier were the only freshmen on the state qualifying 400 and 800 relay teams

is to get me prepared for outdoor," Potts said. "I prefer outdoor track because I just think it's better because there's more competition."

The competitive juices drive her to want more from every practice, and every track meet she participates in.

"Kamata works hard in practice, and she will beg you to let her run five or six events, she's just that competitive," Tucker said.

In many ways, Grier is the same runner as Potts. Her best times are 12.6 seconds in the 100 and 25.9 in the 200.

"Angelic is consistent, and is

basically going to run the same pace," Tucker said. "I knew Angelic was going to be good, just by looking at her run for the first time. She runs so smooth, you could put a glass of water on her head and at the end of the relay the cup would still be full."

Grier, like Potts, is a practiced athlete who is dedicated to her rigorous training.

"We have a pretty rough workout, and we don't allow the girls to use the word, 'can't,'" Tucker explained. "Angelic doesn't complain about the workouts, and if you ask her to do more she will."

Grier ran in the 500 meter dash at Chapel Hill, and like

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